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FTA NEWS

FOOD, TOBACCO, AGRICULTURAL AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA—CIO

Vol. VII, No. 10 August 15, 1947 Aug 68 Price 5 Cents

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A BUCK TO BEAT REACTION

The 80th Congress has gone home after the most disgraceful session since the days of Herbert Hoover.

This Congress voted to destroy your union and rob you of your rights as an American by passing the Taft-Hartley slave labor act.

This Congress voted to gut the Wage Hour act and voted special discriminations against food and tobacco processing workers.

This Congress did nothing to stop jim crow or lynching when it failed to act on polltax repeal, anti-lynch legislation and FEPC.

This Congress voted to raise your rent and stood by while living costs jumped to new inflated high levels.

This Congress stopped all action on raising the minimum wage from 40c an hour to 75c or even 65c.

NOTHING FOR THE PEOPLE

It did nothing to help workers and veterans find housing. It did nothing to aid the national health. It did nothing for education. It did nothing to extend social security to millions now unprotected. It did nothing to help farmers save their land from floods and tried to end all aid to the working farmers.

This Congress did nothing for the people and everything for the rich.

Twice it tried to pass a phoney tax reduction bill that would save the poor man eight cents a day and the rich man $100 a day.

And the 80th Congress did everything in its power to back a foreign policy of interference with other countries and disunity among the nations of the world.

OUR ANSWER

Heard enough? Want to fight back?

Now is the time to dig down to independent labor political action in every ward and precinct, looking to 1947 and 1948 and the defeat of all reactionaries now in Congress.

Political action takes time and money.

Money means dollars for CIO-PAC.

A buck for PAC now is a buck for progress in 1948. A buck for PAC now means a chance to drive the Tafts and the Hartleys out of public life in the next election.

Your local has the PAC receipt books and the PAC buttons. Fill out receipts and wear the buttons for a new Congress in 1948!

Donald Henderson
General President

Harold J. Lane
General Secretary-Treasurer

HOOK HIM!

It's a fact. You can do it. You can hit back hard. You—every member of the CIO—can hit back hard by taking from the political scene those Congressmen and state legislators who seek to crush our unions and lower our wages. You can do it by fighting back with political action, by fighting back with PAC. CIO's political arm—PAC—can answer labor's foes at the ballot box. A bigger, stronger PAC is the solution.

This means organization, political organization. It means money to build such an organization. It means a dollar for PAC, dollars to build PAC everywhere in America. CIO President Philip Murray says "It is absolutely and positively essential. It is a definite responsibility."

Yes, it is essential. It is a responsibility. Within a few weeks, PAC's 1947 $1 voluntary contribution drive begins. Give it your support. You want your union kept strong! You want it to be free to work for your greater security! Strengthen and develop the political structure which can assure this. Back PAC. Give your dollar to PAC.

'48 Is Coming!

Anti-labor legislators must face the voters in 1948. The voters must be informed and organized. PAC must build its organization for these crucial elections now! It's motto is "Build in '47 to win in '48." Support your PAC. Give your dollar to PAC.

FROM WASHINGTON

THE CURTAIN OF FEAR

By C. W. FOWLER, Editor and Publicity Director

For a period of nine years now this writer has been watching the unAmerican activities of a little group of characters in Washington, D. C.

In those nine years—ever since the unAmerican Activities Committee of the Federal Congress was born—I have seen union after union and liberal after liberal put through the Committee wringer in the House Office Building.

It's always quite a show. The chairman, whether he be the ex-Congressman Dies, the fat and pompous Rep. Thomas of New Jersey, or Rankin's stooge Wood of Florida, raps for order and swears the witness. At least six policemen crowd in, patting their revolvers and looking menacingly at the audience—reporters for reactionary newspapers, spies from the FBI and G2, petty fascists from the hate groups and the usual crowd of Washingtonians who have nothing better to do than go to a hearing.

If the witness is a stoolpigeon, such as Pratt, Matthews and Long of Winston-Salem, he gets a sympathetic hearing. The chief investigator, a feretty little man named Stripling, draws out the answers slowly and lovingly to a series of carefully rehearsed questions. Stripling really runs the show. If the chairman talks too much, Stripling looks at him sharply and curtly orders him to stop interrupting.

When the witness happens to be a good union man, or an honest liberal, or an anti-fascist, he gets the works. The chief investigator clips off his questions rapidly, in as hostile a tone as he can manage. The chairman is allowed to bully as much as he likes. The other members chime in viciously, looking hard at the witness and firing questions which they hope will harass, confuse and frighten him into a state of abject terror.

Anything goes in the questioning, including such highly personal matters as the witness' religious beliefs, his church-going habits and the like. No counsel is allowed to defend him. The full weight of Congress, with the weapon of a contempt citation always held up before him, is thrown at the man in the witness chair.

What is the purpose of all this? Why the well-armed cops, the atmosphere of a lynch trial, the almost complete replica of a stormtrooper court in the Germany of 1933?

It is obviously not a sincere attempt to get at "the truth about communism," as the chairman loves to affirm. The unAmerican committee is not interested in learning facts. Its mind is already made up long before the hearing is held. If the witness is a fink and a renegade, the committee is convinced he's a fine, upstanding American. If the witness is an honest union man, the committee is convinced he must be guilty of every crime in the book.

The purpose of the lynch atmosphere of an unAmerican committee hearing is to harass, terrify if it can, disrupt the work of the union and help the bosses destroy it.

In all its nine years of existence, the committee has never once given an honest union man a fair hearing, has never once exposed a fascist, has never once failed to listen to a labor spy with the utmost sympathy and respect.

Many unions besides FTA have been put through the unAmerican committee's star chamber trial. The aim with each of these intended victims is the same—to smear, confuse, disrupt, harass the leaders of the organization and break up the unity of its rank and file.

This writer has watched more than a score of unAmerican committee hearings affecting unions. I have never yet seen a progressive union broken up or successfully disrupted by the unAmerican technique, nor have I seen any truly courageous union leader frightened by it.

The unAmericans, like every other gang of bosses' agents, are bound to fail in their self-appointed task. They will fail because honest men are not impressed by their tactics, because they refuse to be intimidated by bullying.

The curtain of fear that the unAmericans in Congress and their echoes in the newspapers and on the radio are trying to weave around the people of America is full of holes. Pretty soon now the real Americans—the working people and their allies among fairminded people everywhere—will tear it down for good.

NOTICE

The Washington Newsletter, sent to all locals by FTA Legislative Director Elizabeth Sasuly, will not be published during August and September, while Director Sasuly is on tour of the locals to help in organizing political action.

In its place, a complete box score on Congress—"Betrayal in Congress" is being sent to all locals. Extra copies can be secured by writing: FTA-CIO Legislative Dept., Rm. 518; 930 F St. NW, Washington 4, D. C.

NOTE: this is the new address of the FTA Washington office. Old address was 1307 H St. NW, Washington 5, D. C.

URGE UNITY STEPS TO FIGHT TAFTISM

Immediate steps for unity with AFL, Railroad Brotherhoods and all working people affected by the Taft-Hartley act were urged in a special resolution passed by the FTA National Policy Conference meeting in Philadelphia.

Text of the resolution follows:

Passage of the Taft-Hartley act and other repressive laws by the Republican-Democratic alliance in Congress makes unity of labor and all progressive forces more than ever imperative.

Unions are now engaged in a fight for their very existence. Without unity of all workers, that fight is bound to be lost. The employers are determined now to wipe out every last vestige of resistance if they can.

The only hope of defeating the employer's plans for war against the people lies in the people themselves. Rank and file workers, whether CIO, AFL, Railroad Brotherhood or unorganized will know how to win this war.

Every officer and member of FTA-CIO must make it his business now to meet with fellow-workers in the AFL, the Brotherhoods or other organizations. Common strategy and tactics for fighting the Taft-Hartley act and for defeating its sponsors must be worked out locally on a state basis and nationally.

Such unity must not wait for formal calls from top officials of any organization, AFL or CIO. It must take place among the rank and file, regardless of opposition or indifference from officials.

The American people cannot duck this fight. United, they can win it. Apart, they will be destroyed.

FTA Fights For Farmers

(Because FTA-CIO has long had close ties with the working farmers, and because their welfare is bound up with the welfare of our members and of the entire nation, FTA News is here reprinting sectons from the testimony of FTA Washington Representative Elizabeth Sasuly in recent hearings before Congress on farm aid appropriations. Partly as a result of FTA and other protest, deep cuts in aid to small, family farms were somewhat restored in the final appropriation bill.)

The members of the FTA-CIO are concerned with the problem of adequate agricultural appropriations because they process the farm products which the farmers grow. We have a direct and special interest in preserving the soil resources from which these products come, and we have as great an interest in preserving the human resources in agriculture—the farmers.

The wellbeing of those of our members who are agricultural field workers has the most immediate connection with the welfare of the farming population. Finally, as citizens, we are deeply concerned with the maintenance of our national resources.

The bill passed by the House would cut the rate of payments under the established soil conservation program approximately in half, according to Secretary of Agriculture Anderson, in 1948, with a view to subsequently eliminating it entirely.

Abolition of the soil conservation program, with consequent depletion of our resources, would have the effect of reducing production of crops processed by some of the major industries in which our members work. This would be particularly true in the case of tobacco, fruit and vegetable crops, and cotton.

* * *

The farm problem is frequently posed in terms of surpluses. Recently there has been considerable discussion of "surplus farmers" as well as surplus crops. In a recent article on foreign trade policy, Howard H. Hutcheson said "as far as agriculture is concerned, the real problem is not so much surplus farm production as 'surplus farmers'." Similar views have been expressed by the National Association of Manufacturers and in a recent article in Life magazine it was suggested that the solution to the farm problem is to get the bulk of the farmers off the land.

We do not agree with this approach. Our members, who process and produce food, have a stake in seeing that the farmers are in a position to buy the products of industry, and specifically to buy back the food products which we process and which most farmers, since they do not live on self sufficient farms, must purchase. Driving two-thirds of the farmers off the land will not accomplish this.

As for surplus crops, the simple fact remains that there are no surpluses in terms of need. I am sure that no one would seriously put forth the theory that we should destroy our natural resources to guarantee that there will be no "surpluses." It is equally fallacious to propose elimination of the funds available for distribution of so-called surplus foods, through the school lunch program.

FTA NEWS

Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union of America — CIO

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In The Locals

47 Wins Tough One

By John Manus

There are big smiles on the faces of members of Local 47 in Blue Island, Ill. Reason is successful conclusion of negotiations for a new contract which gave them outstanding gains.

Gains include 11½c an hour general increase and six paid holidays. Vacations benefits were improved on by granting a more liberal qualifying clause. A big item that is going to mean a lot to prevent loss of pay and speed-up to these members, is the newly won right to bargain on the incentive plan in the plant. This item alone will make it possible for Libby workers to enjoy their wage increase to the fullest since the company is now blocked in cutting down wages by speed-up and raising labor standards.

Seniority rights were improved as well as job rates were brought into line where inequities had existed. In addition the no-strike clause has been removed from the contract to protect the workers somewhat against the vicious Taft-Hartley law.

Say local leaders: "this contract shows Libby, McNeil and Libby that real unity among the workers cannot be broken." The company terminated the old agreement last April hoping thereby to smash the union. That didn't work. They then started a rumor campagn against paying dues and that didn't work. They tried to make the workers believe no grievances could be handled and that didn't work either.

In each case the workers rallied stronger than ever behind their leaders. Dues were paid promptly in cash and Libby became convinced that to attempt to smash local 47 was a tougher job than they planned.

Members of the negotiating committee were, President, Edgar Robinson, Fay Alvarado, Fin. Sec'y, Victor Anderson, Vice-President, Johnny Manus, Chief Steward, Edna Voss, Margaret Andrews and Andrew Jackson, Stewards. The local committee was assisted by the international through Regional Director Jessica Rhine who gave great leadership in the local and Lewis Bentzley, Vice-President of FTA. Thanks also go to Local 194 which helped in many ways to put over the fight.

15% WON IN ALASKA

By Alice Kinney

Last minute settlement of resident cannery workers' demands averted a strike in 35 Southeastern Alaska salmon canneries last month.

The 1947 contract signed between Locals 237, 251, 222 and 269 and the Alaska Salmon Industry brought a 15 percent increase in hourly rates of 16 to 18 cents an hour; a 12½ percent increase on the seasonal wage guarantee ranging from $337.50 to $264.37, and a 29 cent an hour increase for unclassified workers.

Passage of the Taft-Hartley law during the 28 days of negotiations failed to weaken the union's position. An important clause included in the contract released the union from responsibility for unauthorized strikes under the law.

Grievances instead of hanging fire until the end of the canning season will be settled on the spot under the new contract.

Fight unAmericans With Facts

Aiming to unmask and expose the role of the House Committee on unAmerican Activities, Local 15 has begun to publicize FTA's new pamphlet "Who's unAmerican" among the citizens of Charleston, S. C.

A letter to civic clubs, labor organizations, political leaders, newspapers and radio stations and liberal citizens was sent out by the Local last week containing sample copies of the pamphlet.

"We urge all our friends and their organizations to secure this pamphlet," the letter said. "All who are desirous of upholding the constitutional rights of minorities need to know the truth and the real aims of the unAmerican Committee."

The Local also asked these organizations to send resolutions condemning the activities of the House unAmerican Committee to Senators, Congressmen, and to J. Parnell Thomas, chairman of the committee.

66 Wins First Contract

FTA's first contract with a Kentucky tobacco redrying plant was signed last week between the American Suppliers, Inc., and Local 66 of Lexington, Ky. The company is a subsidiary of the American Tobacco Co.

Two weeks' vacation at 80 hours pay after one year; maintenance of membrship; voluntary check-off and four hours call-in pay, were some of the new local's first gains.

Seasonal workers will get 20 hours bonus pay for the first season worked and 40 hours bonus pay for the second season, with preference on year-round jobs.

Wages are to be negotiated in November. The contract also contains a clause in which the company affirms the need for a union to maintain harmony between labor and management.

Members of the negotiating committee included Homer Smother, Clarence Bledsoe and George Deamus, assisted by International Organizer Reuel Stanfield.

Who Takes Care . . . ?

What happens when Teamsters picket Teamsters?

This was the question which had Teamster Cannery workers at the Hunt Foods plant in Hayward, California, scratching their heads recently.

The cannery workers, all members of the AFL Teamsters union, came to work one morning to find a picket line of Teamster truck drivers marching up and down in front of the plant.

"What gives?" said the cannery workers. "Is this a strike for more dough?"

No one seemed to know what the score was, but it finally developed that the Teamster truck drivers wanted jurisdiction over the lift trucks which were being driven by Teamster cannery workers.

The beef was finally settled, according to reports, when the company added some extra Teamster truck drivers as swampers to help load and unload trucks.

WHAT CONGRESS DID TO YOU— AND HOW IT HELPED THE RICH

The 80th Congress, controlled by a GOP majority and a tory bloc of polltax Democrats, has gone home.

While they're home, the Congressmen will hear from the voters. What each Congressman hears depends on his record on the issues.

Here are the issues that Congress acted on, or failed to act upon.

Without exception, the record shows that the majority of the 80th Congress acted in the interests of the rich and against the interests of the people.

Let's look at the record:

WHAT CONGRESS DID

Slave Labor Over the protest of millions of workers, Congress passed the Taft-Hartley slave labor act, designed to break unions, cut wages and bring what CIO President Philip Murray called "the first step toward the development of fascism in the U. S. A."

Republicans and poll-tax Democrats alike ganged up to shove the slave act through. President Truman's veto was not backed up by Democratic party leadership to block the bill. Democrats and Republicans alike did the bidding of the National Association of Manufacturers in place of hearing the people's will.

Wage Cuts Using a newspaper campaign against so-called "portal pay" suits as a mask, Congress passed the Gwynne bill to gut the Wage Hour act. This is done by stripping the act of almost all enforcement powers, by leaving interpretation in the hands of employers, and by preventing recovery of back pay owed for employer violations.

The Gwynne bill is aimed particularly at unorganized or poorly organized workers, who need strong legal protections in the absence of a strong union. It bears especially heavily on workers in low wage industries, such as covered in FTA's jurisdiction.

Rent Control The last barrier against inflated living costs was swept away when Congress passed the 15% rent raise bill, backed by what President Truman called one of the most vicious lobbies in the U. S. Here again GOP and tory Democrats teamed up to soak the poor, aid the rich. New law also destroyed remnants of veterans' housing program by removing all restrictions on materials and nonresidential building.

Tax Steal **Boldest attempt to pick the pockets of the poor for the benefit of the rich was the twice-passed, twice vetoed "tax reduction" bill which would give a family with a $2,500 a year an eight cent a day tax cut, a man with $300,000 a year a $102 a day cut. Truman vetoed the bill twice, but failed to press for a fair tax plan to place burden on the wealthy, relieve the workers of present unfair share.**

Civil Rights Almost the entire Congress joined in an all-out assault on civil rights of all Americans, aimed at fascist style "thought control" as in Germany and Japan. The un-American committee stepped up its drive against unions, selecting FTA and UE-CIO as first victims, while the House Labor Committee ran its own witch-hunt against unions. Truman said "me too" with order to purge all U. S. workers having "dangerous thoughts."

Aid Reaction Congress completed the break with FDR policy of cooperation with peaceful nations by voting to end aid to democratic countries, spend $400,000,000 for arms to fascist governments in Greece, Turkey. This "Truman doctrine" was supported by same Congressmen who voted for Taft-Hartley act.

Slash Farmers **To the tune of routine "how I love the farmer" speeches, GOP majority slashed millions from aid to working farmers in cuts on soil conservation, school lunch program (affecting both farmers' and workers' families), electrification of farms, etc. Even deeper cuts made in U. S. agencies handling labor affairs.**

WHAT CONGRESS DIDN'T DO

Jim-Crow Despite GOP campaign promises, Congress did nothing to stop discrimination or end lynching. FEPC remained buried. Anti-lynch bill never got past committee. Polltax repeal bill was passed by the House (fourth time) in recent years), got nowhere in Senate. Tieup of polltax Democrats with Republicans to pass Taft-Hartley act paid off in GOP silence on jimcrow, lynching, discrimination.

Wages **In line with gutting Wage Hour act, Congress dumped bill to raise minimum wage from present 40c to 65c. Exemptions from overtime in food, tobacco industries continue.**

What this country needs is a new Congress—and not a five cent one either.

Start now to organize independent labor political action in every ward and precinct. Build labor political work for a new party to fight for workers and common people.

Give a buck to CIO-PAC—it's less than a fraction of what the 80th Congress has cost you in wages, living costs, jobs and freedom.

Know your Congressman's record—AND FIGHT BACK NOW!

FTA asked 75c minimum, end to exemptions to protect lowest paid workers.

Housing Nothing done on housing — except to remove few remaining controls on building racetracks, nightclubs etc. Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill to help build low cost mass housing killed by GOP majority. Veterans left homeless, evictions mounting every day.

Security Nothing done to extend social security protection to millions of rural workers, farmers etc. now without it. Nothing done to increase meager benefits now paid to help cushion coming depression. Health, education needs of people similarly ignored. Equal pay for equal work ignored.

Cost of Living Nothing done to ease cost of living, everything done to increase it. No plans whatever to head off expected economic crisis. "Study" begun by Sen. Taft June 24—one month before adjournment.

FTA 50 Wins 100% Seniority

Armed with a vote of more than 10 to 1 for a strike, negotiators for FTA Cannery Workers Local 50 last week brought the Fruitvale Canning Co. in east Oakland to terms and won an agreement granting a complete union shop for the CIO and the best seniority clause in the industry.

All employees must join the FTA within 10 days, FTA Local 50 announced.

A dues checkoff also is provided. The standard wage scale will prevail.

The seniority clause gives seniority rights to all employees from the time they go to work, including the right to being hired in the next season.

In the past, seniority rights were held only by those who had worked 60 per cent of the season.

The grievance procedure provides for a steward in each department and the company must reply in writing to all grievances.

The company must furnish gloves and other working equipment.

Another completely new feature for the industry is the right to maternity leaves.

Those who represented Cannery Workers Local 50 in negotiations were FTA Regional Director Jack Montgomery, Intl. Representatives Hursel Alexander and Roberta Montgomery, Sec. Angelina Goularte of the CIO Cannery Council and Florence Costa, Charles McKinney, Fleater Hughes, Jane Hoag, Gussie Ortega and Billie Vargas of the local union.

HOW TO FIGHT RENT CHISELLING LANDLORD

Although the new rent law has seriously weakened rent control, your landlord can't blackjack you into a rent increase. The new law still provides some protection against rent increases and unwarranted evictions, according to information recently sent to FTA locals by President Donald Henderson.

Do not pay more than the legal rent. Ceilings on housing are in effect until February 29, 1948. It can continue beyond that date if federal rent control is renewed or if your state passes a rent control law.

The only way your landlord can raise your rent up to 15 percent is if you voluntarily sign a lease to run to December 31, 1948. However, you need not sign a lease at all.

Resist evictions. If you feel an eviction is not justified, you must take it to the local court and fight it. At least 30 days eviction notice is required in most states. If you need more time to find a new home you must get a stay of eviction from your local court.

The only legal grounds on which a landlord can evict are: failure to pay rent, committing a nuisance, violating your obligation as a tenant, using your house for illegal or immoral purposes or for other than living purposes.

Other reasons may be that the landlord needs the house for his own use, or has sold it and the buyer wants to move in. If he wants to alter or remodel the house, the landlord has to prove that it can't be done with the tenant living in it.

Form tenants' associations. Report rent violations to the area rent office and sue the landlord in court for overcharges. "If you form a strong tenants' association, you can stand together against landlord pressure," President Henderson advised.

"Organize now in every apartment house and on a neighborhood basis to resist landlord pressure to sign voluntary leases with a 15 percent increase, and organize to fight evictions with the help of friendly lawyers."

Through political action, these organizations should fight for city and state laws which will safeguard against evictions; put old rent ceilings into effect, using the organization and records of the ara rent office; and provide authority for the area rent office as well as tenants to launch civil damage suits against violators of the rent laws.

RAP AFL DISUNITY

CIO President Murray sharply criticized the AFL leadership last week for blocking united action now against the enemies of labor by refusing to discuss anything but organizational unity.

In a letter to AFL President William Green, Murray charged the AFL Executive Council with preventing the establishment of "immediate working unity to defeat the drive of reaction on both economic and political fronts."

"Your refusal to discuss this vital subject while insisting upon long drawn out negotiations on organizational unity," Murray said, "must be viewed with alarm by all who appreciate the dangers which presently confront labor and the nation."

He termed the AFL's position inconsistent with the agreement worked out between representatives of the two groups last May, where it was understood that a program of joint action was to be worked out at future meetings.

CIO Packers Show:

MEAT TRUST HIJACKS THE USA FOR PROFITS

Sore about the sky-high price of meat these days? Blame it on the meat packing monoply which is pocketing the increase in the form of profits.

Citing Department of Agriculture figures, the CIO United Packinghouse Workers charged the "monopoly control of meat exercised by the large packers" with callous indifference to the needs "of American lower and moderate income groups who are compelled to pay these high prices or else do without meat for their families." The union called for government investigation into monopoly control of the meat industry.

Figures for June, 1947, show the packers' beef markup was 43 percent higher than the increased prices to farmers and 19 per cent more than retail prices.

"It is appropriate at this time to bring the public's attention to the claims made by industry spokesman last fall that plenty of meat would be available at reasonable prices once price control was destroyed," UPW President Ralph Helstein said.

"That prophecy has proven false. We have, instead, a continuing rise in meat prices and an apparent attitude by the packers to charge the highest possible prices that the traffic can bear."

Helstein accused the packers of trying to shift the blame for high meat prices to farmers and retailers through slick advertising campaigns.

"It is a sad commentary on our present Congress," he said, "that it is inquiry-minded as to the operations of legitimate trade unions and other progressive organizations, but has not taken any action to investigate the cause for the meat price gouge which is now going on."

"A thorough investigation of the control of our national meat supply by a few packing companies and their banks is the proper function of our government at this time."

Ask PAC $

Political Action funds are needed to defeat the Taft-Hartley Act and elect a people's Congress in 1948. A goal of $25,000 for FTA in the CIO-PAC drive was set last month by the Executive Board.

In a letter to financial secretaries, Secretary-Treasurer Harold J. Lane urged locals to call meetings of PAC committees together with shop stewards to set up collection machinery and publicity in the plants.

PAC instructions, receipt books, buttons and leaflets accompanied Lane's letter.

PAC contributions should be solicited at all union meetings and PAC committees should see that every member in the plant is registered to vote, and receives information on Congressmen and Senators' voting records, Lane said.

Says Sen. Taft: "You can buy meat if you pay for it." Wasn't there a gal named Marie Antoinette who made a crack something like that once? And what happened to her?

FTA OFFICERS

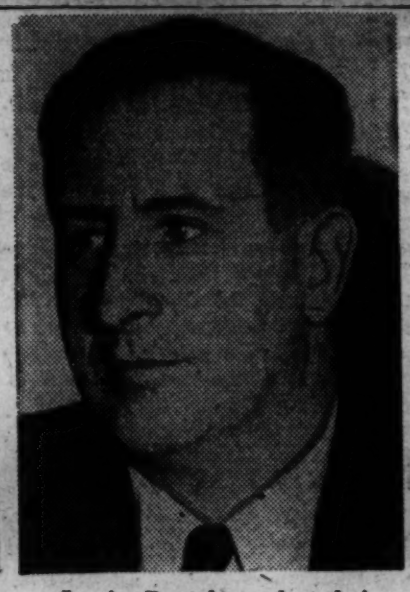
Accepting the resignation of Luisa Moreno with deep regret, the Executive Board at its recent meeting unanimously elected Lewis Bentzley FTA vice-president in her place.

Sister Moreno served in FTA since 1937, and was an outstanding leader in FTA and a leading woman in the American labor movement. The impossibility of serving as a full time national officer for personal reasons compelled her to submit her resignation to the Board.

Bentzley, a founder of Local 80 in Camden, N. J., and mid-Atlantic Director, will be responsible for directing FTA's farm-labor relations program. Herbert Kling, president of Local 80 was elected to Bentzley's place on the Board and to his post as mid-Atlantic Regional Director.

Other changes in Regional Directors were made in the Ohio-Michigan-Kentucky region where Warren Horie replaced Armando Valdes, on leave of absence due to ill health. Paul Gardner, former business agent of Local 114, replaced Harry Virgil as Director in Wisconsin - Minnesota.

Louisa Moreno, former FTA vice-president, retired...



Lewis Bentzley, elected in Moreno's place...

Herb Kling, new FTA Board member, Regional Director.

TAKE OVER TRUSTS, SAY PCA

Calling for public ownership of coal mines, railroads and electric power, the Progressive Citizens of America warned that monopoly's strangle - hold on American industry is leading to "impoverishment, fascism and war."

Pointing out that "concentration of private power . . . has reached unprecedented heights," PCA's national directors, meeting here, advocated that the three industries mentioned be run by independent government corporations like the TVA which would "protect to the full the rights of labor and consumers."

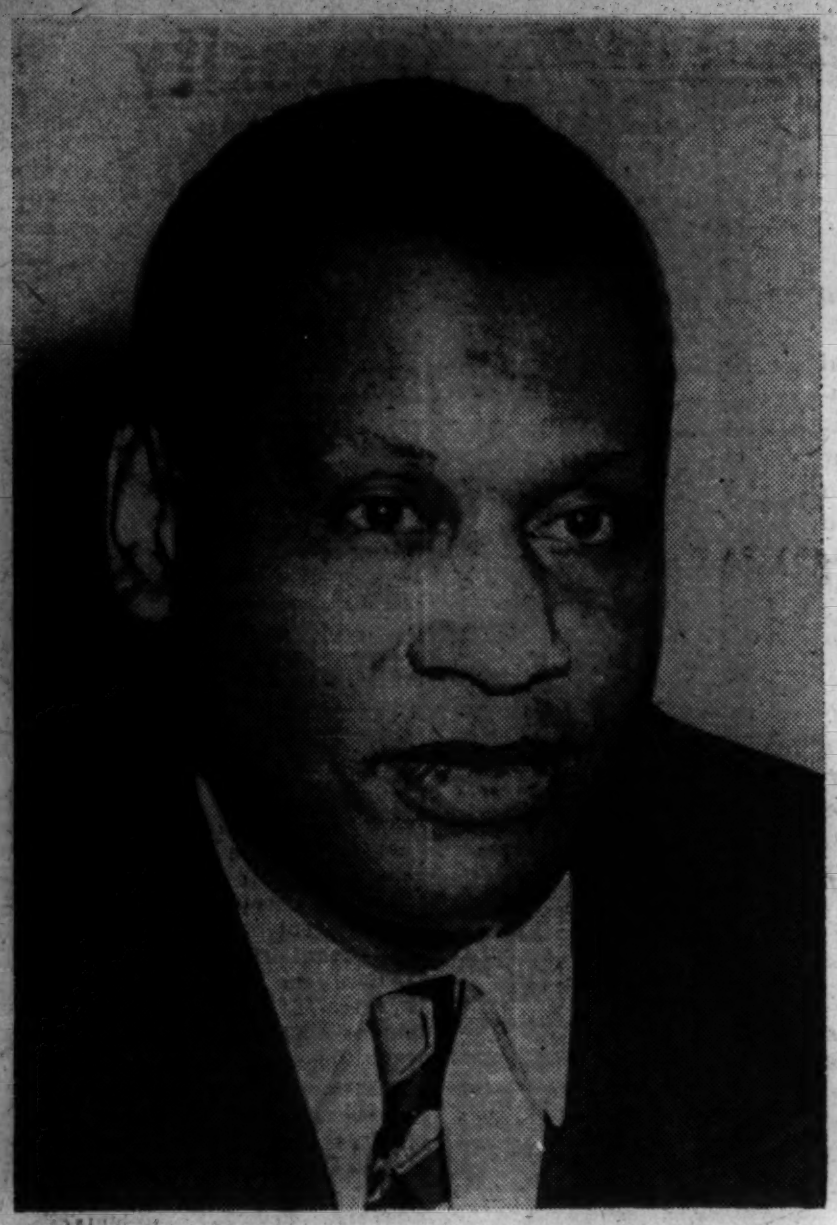
Outlining the reasons for its proposal, the PCA made the following observations on each of the industries:

Coal: "Private ownership has proved wasteful and inefficient. It has failed to provide a decent livelihood and physical safety to the miners. It will be totally incapable of planning and carrying through the far-reaching readjustments which the non-military use of atomic energy will sooner or later make unavoidable. Only public ownership can solve these problems."

Railroads: "Under private ownership they have failed to modernize their equipment and operations; they practice intolerable monopolistic discrimination against whole sections of the country; they have allowed the living standards of their employes to fall seriously behind those of workers in comparable occupations."

Power: "Private ownership has proved incapable of anticipating and meeting the power needs of the country; it obstructs because it cannot foster the planned development of water power resources and does not reduce the rates sufficiently; it will fight tooth and nail against the national use of atomic energy which is universally conceded to be too important to be entrusted to private hands."

The administration's foreign policy also got a going-over in the PCA statement, which charged that the Truman doctrine has not been abandoned. U. S. foreign policy is still based on "the rebuilding of a reactionary Germany and Japan; encouragement and aid to dictatorships in Spain, Greece, Turkey, China and Argentina; colonial oppression of the Philippine Islands; proposals for the military domination of South America and the President's proposed universal military training program," it said.



Paul Robeson, world famous singer and fighter for freedom, told Local 22 members in Winston-Salem's biggest mass meeting that workers everywhere had their eyes on the struggle with the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.

Stoolpigeons' Holiday

unAmericans Attack FTA

It was stoolpigeons' holiday in the hearing room of the House unAmerican Activities committee July 24 when three ex-employes of FTA Local 22 and three present officials were called before the Thomas-Rankin committee for what is formally called an "investigation."

The three stoolpigeons — Ann Matthews, former stenographer, Spencer Long and Gene Pratt, former employes who quit during the strike—were treated with the utmost respect and even deference by the committee as they spun long tales of alleged "communist domination" of the local.

In contrast, the three officials —co-Chairman Robert Black and W. Clark Shepherd and FTA Intl. Representative Edwin McCrea— were treated curtly and rudely and were angrily dismissed by the committee when they refused to answer illegal and unconstitutional questions.

Matthews kicked off for the bosses' team, with Pratt and Long following. Matthews, who left the union when she failed to give a reason for requesting a leave of absence (giving the reason would have embarassed her and another of the trio), seemed to possess an amazingly fertile memory. She could recall conversations and meetings of several years back in the utmost detail—and did, without so much as batting an eye.

Pratt was equally pleased with himself, turning and twisting in the witness chair like a fourth-rate actor playing for applause. Some of Pratt's remarks must have displeased the R. J. Reynolds Company, as when he naively admitted that he joined the union to "break it up from the inside," or again when se said he didn't know whether or not the Reynolds strike "was justified."

(The Reynolds strike began when the super-rich company refused more than 5½c an hour wage increases; it lasted 38 days; the workers won a settlement considerably over the 5½c originally offered.)

Long didn't do so well. His voice was low and his answers hesitant—but that didn't matter, for he too had a tale to tell of "communist domination."

The committee's manner changed sharply when they came to question Black, Shepherd and McCrea. Gone was the studied politeness, the helpful attitude. In its place was a kind of snarling formality, especially when the chief investigator, a sinister little man named Robert Stripling, asked the opening question: "Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of, or affiliated to, the Communist Party?"

All three refused to answer the question, or others based on it, because no committee of Congress or any other agency has the legal or constitutional right to ask it.

They refused also because, as they said, "it would tend to incriminate and degrade" then—as the committee meant it should. Had they answered either way—yes or no—the committee and its investigator would have taken it as a signal for a prolonged attack on Local 22, its members, its objectives, on the entire FTA and the whole of the labor movement.

The refusal to answer protected the union from such a smearing attack during the hearing. In doing so, the three officials temporarily blocked the committee and denied R. J. Reynolds the pleasure and profit it might have got from the spectacle.

This was obviously the motive of the committee, as FTA President Donald Henderson and McCrea pointed out in statements. McCrea summed it up when he told the committee:

"The House Committee on un-American Activities is trying to do something the richest and most powerful member of the tobacco trust could not do—to break the union of 10,000 members of FTA-CIO at the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. in Winston-Salem, N. C.

"The leaders of FTA Local 22 are accused of being 'unAmerican.' If this is so, then raising the wages of Reynolds workers from 46 cents an hour to 88 cents must be considered 'un-American.' We are confident that the workers and all fair-minded people will decide otherwise."

And as Henderson said: "The unAmerican committee has a long history of aiding employers against unions. It has never once attacked fascism in the U. S. It has sheltered all varieties of employer spies, paid disrupters, and even criminals in its war against unions. The committee should be abolished and its members retired from public life."

The chief unAmerican, Rep. Thomas (R., N. J.), himself admitted these charges when he told reporters later on that the committee would ask the new Nat'l. Labor Relations Board to deprive Local 22 and FTA of bargaining rights under the Taft-Hartley act.

All doubts of the unAmericans' real purpose in attacking FTA and other CIO unions vanished with a remark like that.

WIN BEEF IN 47

Adele Ellis, president of Local 57 and FTA Merit Award Winner, has demonstrated once more her ability to safeguard the rights of the workers.

Benjamin Greene, returned veteran, whose seniority record was fouled up by the personnel office of the Southern Biscuit Co. after his return to work, has won a grievance which not only restores his proper senority rights, but he has received 60 hours of his 1946 vacation as well.

His hourly rate has been brought up to its proper rate and he received $179 in back pay, made up of the differential between his proper rate and the lower rate he had been forced to take.

Adele Ellis spent weeks in compiling the records necessary to win this grievance.

Where's Alvin?

FOR FASCISTS ONLY

Representative Alvin O'Konski, the Wisconsin Republican who tried to prevent Henry Wallace from speaking in Washington, D. C., last May, believes in free speech for fascists.

At least that's the impression we got when O'Konski didn't lift a finger to prevent Gerald L. K. Smith from speakng at the Washington Monument (of all places) August 3.

FTA Vice-President Armando Ramirez called Smith's scheduled appearance to O'Konski's attention. "The Washington Monument is sacred to countless millions of Americans," Ramirez wrote.

"It should not be polluted by the presence of a bigoted, pro-fascist rabble rouser like Smith, who has been exposed countless times as an enemy of all decent Americans."

Ramirez asked the Congressman whether or not he planned to have Smith prevented from speaking. "I want to inform our Wisconsin membership of your stand," he added. "Please let me know as soon as possible."

Wisconsin members, please note: The cat's got O'Konski's tongue.

25 Endorses New Party

By Dixie Tiller

The Orange County, Calif., Division of Local 25, through its Executive Board and at meetings of three of its departments has endorsed national FTA policy on the organization of a new people's party.

This Division of the local located in the heart of reaction, Orange County, Calif., realizes, perhaps more than others the absolute necessity of electing men to office who will truly represent the desires and aims of all workers.

The Orange County Division is proud to be a part of this growing movement along with the other locals of FTA, the Marine Cooks and Stewards, the Packinghouse workers, the Utility workers and many others.

With such unity of purpose among the working people we are bound to make a profound change in our next Congress.

ORGANIZE, BUILD FTA TO FIGHT SLAVE ACT

By John Tisa, Director of Organization

Organizing the unorganized under the Taft-Hartley law won't be easy, but it can and must continue.

FTA's new program adopted by the Executive Board, stresses strengthening locals by consolidating and closing ranks; organizing the unorganized without NLRB elections in areas where locals already exist; and amalgamation of small locals.

Number one job for both the leaders and members of FTA locals is to lessen the gap in our plants under contract between those who are members of the union and those who are not members.

This requires a carefully planned and aggressive program to solidify the ranks of our membership. It will be the best way of answering the Tafts and Hartleys and meeting the head-on attacks of the employers.

Now, more than ever, we must involve the rank and file into militant organizational activity. There is no substitute for a committee of active workers carrying out the union's program inside the plant.

One of the best ways of building the strength of our locals is to organize the unorganized workers of our jurisdiction into our locals. This will not be easy here-on-in.

An overwhelming majority of the workers in a plant must be signed up before the employer is approached for recognition. An attempt should be made to call in a neutral agency other than the new NLRB to conduct an election. Only after the employer refuses to recognize the union or agree to such an election should the workers be prepared to strike.

FTA policy requires that at least 75 percent of the members attending a meeting vote to strike before such action can be taken, in addition to approval from the national office.

Finally, every possible means should be used to bring about the repeal of the Taft-Hartley law.

82 ELECTS

Newly elected officers of Local 82, Modesto, Calif., are: John Harnish, president; Wesley, Hensley, vice-president; Sarah Miller, secretary-treasurer; Nellie Calderon, secretary; Alice Tucker, Tillie Lima, Carl Couey, Ken Sweeney, and Carl Zalace, trustees.

Newspapers, radio lie daily about FTA, all progressive unions, to help Congress un-American committee promote the bosses' smear line against us. Read "Who's un-American!", FTA's new pamphlet giving anti-union history of un-American. Order from Publicity Dept., FTA-CIO, 20th and Race, Philadelphia 3, Pa. 10c a copy.

FIGHT SLAVE ACT WITH UNITY, FACTS

By Connie Anderson, Educational Director

Does the NLRB Protect Workers from Firing for Union Activity and from other Unfair Labor Practices by Employers?

No. Although employers are forbidden to engage in anti-union activities, these have become empty words, because so many changes and additions have been made that employers will not be stopped by the NLRB.

What are some of the changes which pull the teeth out of enforcement?

1. The employer has a right to fire a worker for "cause." It is easy enough for an employer to find a rule which an active trade unionist has broken—a slip which would otherwise be ignored. Under the old Board, such workers were reinstated with back pay if there was reasonable proof that the employer's real motive was to get rid of a good union member.

2. Employers are allowed so-called "free speech." Anti-union lies therefore cannot be used in proving anti-union actions.

3. The cards are stacked so that employers have an argument that they are not responsible for acts of foremen unless the foreman is proved to be the "agent" of the employer. Under the old law, an employer could be forced to stop anti-union acts by anyone acting in the interest of the employer—foreman, supervisors, anti-union citizens groups, etc.

4. Court procedures must be followed in hearings, involving witnesses from the shop in confusing and restricting rigamarole and forcing unions to employ lawyers and go to other heavy expenses. The methods of the old Board were common sense and informal, so that average people could speak and the facts be established — and without going to union-busting expenses.

5. The NLRB cannot employ people to analyze the economics—the real heart—of any situation. How back pay could be computed under this restriction is hard to see, to take a simple example.

6. A union cannot bring a case:

a. Unless both the local and national union have submitted voluminous records on union finances and affairs to the government, and can show that copies of the financial reports have been furnished to ALL members of the union. (How any union can have a complete, accurate mailing list of all members at any one time is beyond human comprehension. Should an employer care to use this provision for stalling purposes, he would simply find someone who did not, or said he did not, get the reports.)

b. Unless officers of both the local and national unions have signed affidavits that they are not Communists.

Unions have concluded that these requirements are just an excuse to harrass unions by involving them in endless paper work, court cases and arguments about "Communism."

The last resort of many employers in organizing drives and strikes is to shout "Communists." Most recent FTA example is the Reynolds strike. The Republican Party especially leans heavily on this trick in political elections. FDR's New Deal program was labelled a "communist plot," and Mrs. Roosevelt was said to be in direct touch with Moscow. In the 1946 elections, people who opposed anti-labor candidates were tools, supposedly, of the so-called "PAC - CIO - Communists." Today, **instead of debating wages, prices, houses and other real issues,** mouthpieces of Big Business are levelling the same charges at Wallace.

The trick in the Taft-Hartley Act is to call any progressive union work "communist," then yank the union leaders into any court in the land—preferrably to a small town in the South where the propaganda is thickest—and get some jury to convict them of being "communists."

The Taft-Hartley requirements for reports and affidavits add up simply to old-fashioned union-busting.

7. A general counsel (lawyer) confirmed by the Senate, has sole and final authority to what investigations will be made, hearings held and complaints issued. This is the last neat touch by the Taft-Hartley crew to make sure they control the whole business.

Would unions get justice from such a set-up? Or would we simply be climbing into a spider's web if we brought anti-union charges to this NLRB? FTA and many other unions have already decided to keep out of the web.

Although the Taft-Hartley Act is a severe anti-union measure, there is no need for panic in FTA locals. *If we work correctly, we will maintain and increase our union unity and bargaining strength, in spite of this new law.*

This is an important point for all FTA members to understand. For there will undoubtedly be cases of discharge, or of refusal to bargain, for instance, where the members might ask, "why does the union not haul the boss up before the NLRB, to make him stop?" Such workers will have failed to understand that the Board "ain't what she use to be"—that **there is no longer a Board which will make the employer stop.**

Can Unions Get NLRB Elections to Win Bargaining Rights?

This question is very much like the one above. To fool with the Board's election machinery would be to drag the workers who want recognition into a suffocating morass of technicalities, expense and delay.

In connection with elections there are now, in addition to Board changes already mentioned above, provisions which will allow craft unions to nose in to split up industrial unions, and will allow company unions to be on the ballot, and provisions that employer charges of unfair labor practices against the union must be settled before an election can be held. These provide tidy methods of disrupting and stalling should the union's chances of winning look good.

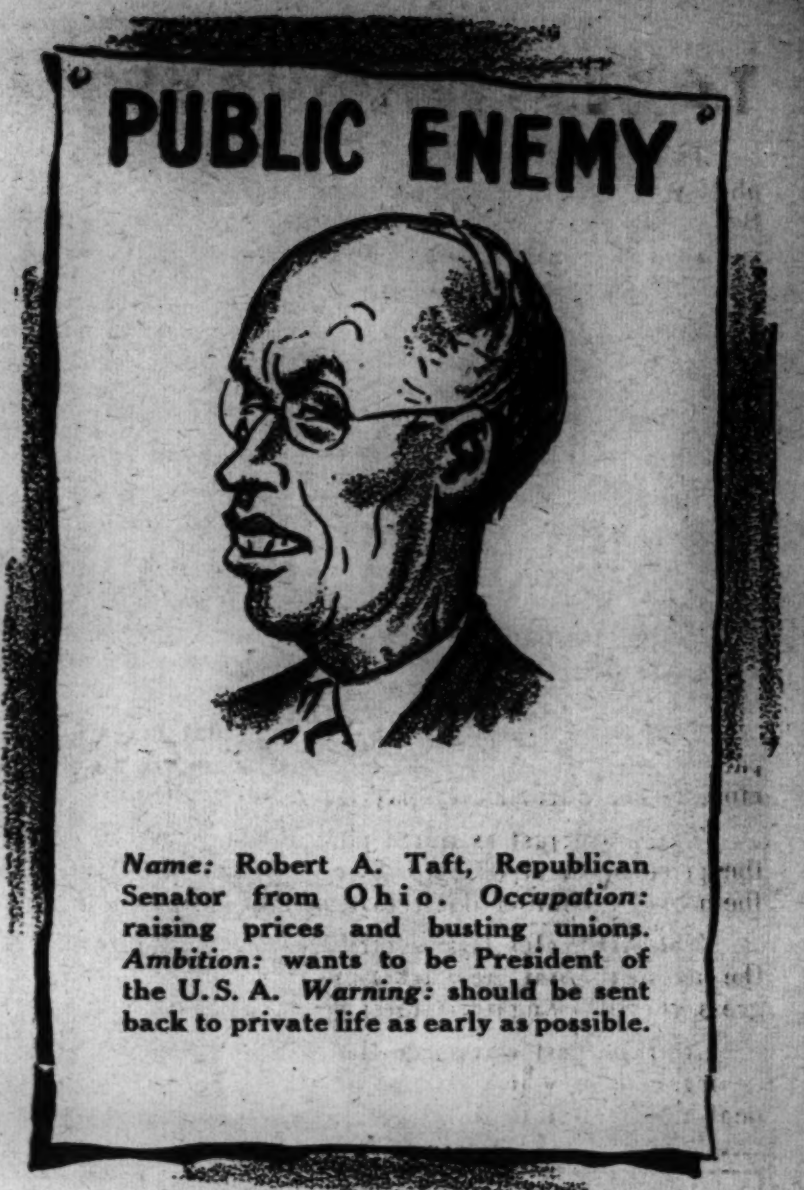
Some of the unfair labor charges which can now be slapped on unions include failure to bargain and "coercing" workers. On the last point, especially, it's child's play for an employer to trump up a charge. As CIO lawyer Lee Pressman puts it, any company lawyer who could not stall an election for at least three years should be fired as incompetent.

Under such circumstances, most unions, including FTA, will of course no longer go to the NLRB for elections. How, then, can we win recognition?

1. By economic strength. Persuade the employer to bargain. If he won't, threaten to strike, or strike. That's how it was from 1776 until the Wagner Act was declared constitutional in 1937.

2. By getting ministers or other outstanding public figures or organzation in town to conduct an election. If we use our ingenuity and work hard, public opinion can be built up, in many cases, to force the employer to cooperate and accept the results.

(To be continued)



Name: **Robert A. Taft, Republican Senator from Ohio.** ***Occupation:*** **raising prices and busting unions.** ***Ambition:*** **wants to be President of the U.S.A.** ***Warning:*** **should be sent back to private life as early as possible.**

Over-Fatigue Invites Polio in Summer Months

Strenuous exercise or games causing extreme fatigue should be avoided during the hot summer months as another precaution against polio, the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, through its local chapter, stresses among six simple health rules that should be observed in combatting the disease.

Tests on laboratory animals carried out in experiments financed by March of Dimes funds, showed that where animals were strenuously exercised, twice as many of them exposed to the virus developed more severe forms of infantile paralysis than did those which had rested quietly in their cages.

The studies indicate, the National Foundation points out, the wisdom of avoiding extreme fatigue is a worthwhile precaution in the polio danger months—June through September.

Call Cigar Meet

Announcement of an FTA cigar industry conference August 9-10 was made by President Henderson in a call to all locals with contracts in the cigar industry.

The conference, to be held at the FTA Natonal Office, 20th and Race Sts., Philadelphia, will take up the problems of co-ordinating work in the cigar industry and further organization; effects of the Taft-Hartley Act; the introduction of double-die machines; and other industry problems.

NEW OFFICERS

Newly elected officers of Local 71, Van Wert, Ohio, are: Leona Angevine, president; Almeda Crone, vice-president; Gwendolyn Vian, recording secretary; Daisy Grate, financial secretary; Pauline Hammack, sgt.-at-arms; Catherine Baer and Helen Essex, trustees; and Edna Boroff, chief steward.

* * *

New officers for Local 72, Findlay, O., are: Curtis Shriver, president; Evelyn Maffitt, vice-president; Margaret Overholt, financial secretary; George Oman, sgt.-at-arms; Iva Dailey, Violet Shifferly and Agnes Williamson, trustees; and Goldie Downing, chief steward.

* * *

Newly elected officers of Local 110, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, are: Wesley Kopecky, president; Mervin Myers, vice-presidents; Louis Jedlicka, financial secretary and business agent; Mae Davis, recording secretary, Frank Kerres and Rita Riley, chief stewards; and William Holmes, Shirley Nelson and Robert Dochterman, trustees.

FTA On The Air

FTA-CIO is on the air Saturday, August 23, at 5 to 5:30 pm Eastern Standard Time over the coast-to-coast network of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Occasion is CBS program "Cross Section USA", produced in cooperation with CIO and other groups. Sylvia Neff, financial secretary of FTA Local 80, Camden, N. J., will be interviewed on the question: "Are Women Discriminated Against In Making a Living?"

NOTE the time: Saturday, August 23, 5 to 5:30 pm EST over the Columbia Broadcasting System network. Check your station for local time—and listen in!

TAXES—WHO PAYS 'EM?

Take a look at the chart below and you will see how phoney the tax "reduction" plans of the Republicans are. Before the war, individual income taxpayers (including rich and poor alike) paid one quarter of all U, S. taxes, corporations another quarter.

In 1944, GOP and polltax Democrats passed a tax bill over FDR's veto that upped the individual income tax share of U. S. revenue to 43%, while corporations share was 35%. (This bill also hit workers extremely hard, by lowering exemptions and increasing rates on small incomes.)

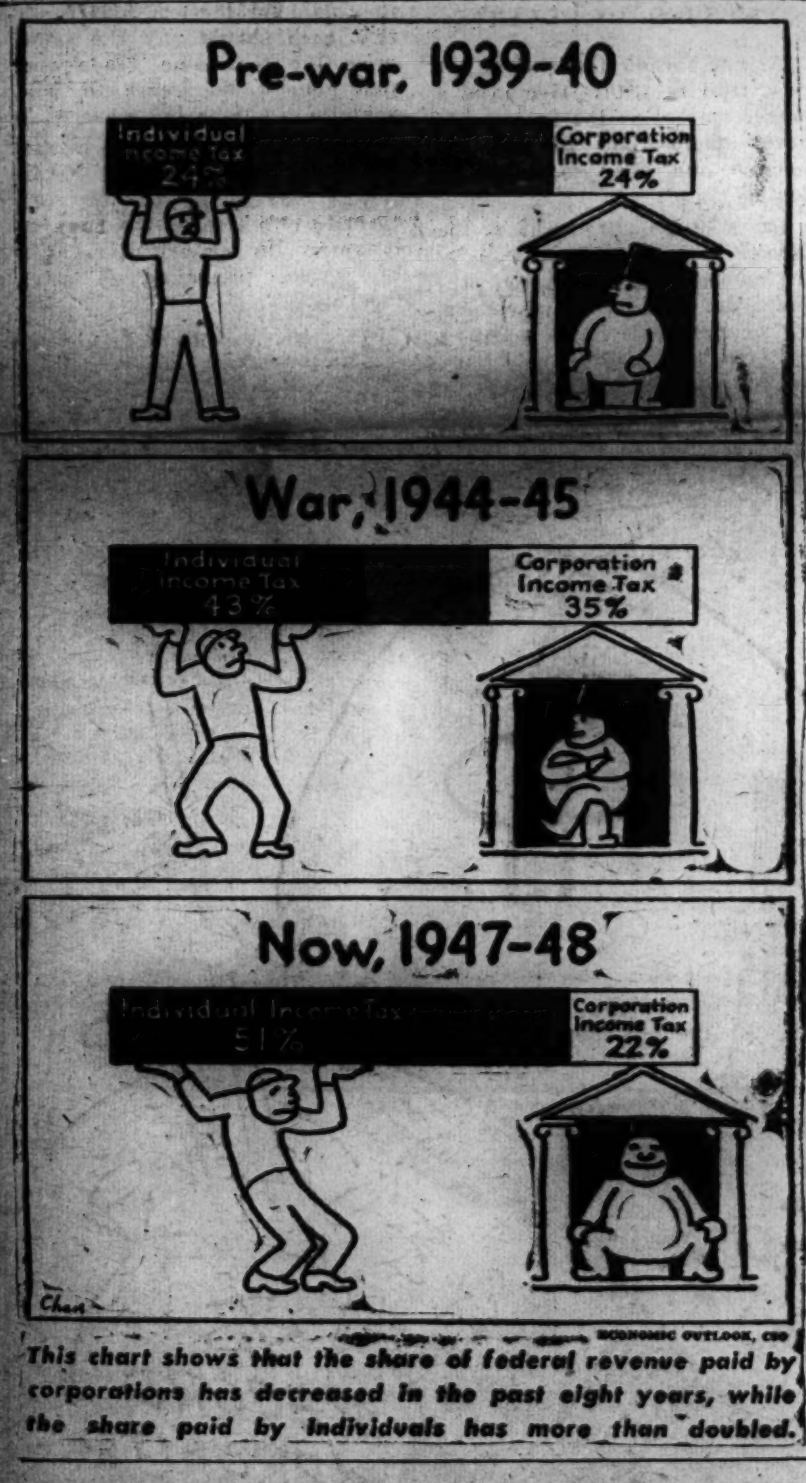
Today, beginning at an income level of $500 a year (for single people), income tax provides 51% of all revenue, corporation taxes only 22%. On top of that, the GOP tried twice in Congress to give still more gravy to the rich by the twice passed, twice vetoed HR 1—the bill that would "relieve" the workingman of eights cents a day on his taxes and the industrialist of $100 a day.

Too many workers fail to realize that taxes are now part of the cost of living, and fail to realize how much more of the burden they pay than the wealthy do.

Taxes are just as much part of your cost of living as the price of meat or eggs. The fact that you don't hand them over a counter doesn't mean that they aren't there.

The GOP, plus reactionary Democrats, try to increase the tax steal from the workers in this Congress. Next Congress, they'll try again—unless we stop them.

And the best way to do that—in fact the only way—is to organize now in every ward and precinct for independent labor action in '48.



This chart shows that the share of federal revenue paid by corporations has decreased in the past eight years, while the share paid by individuals has more than doubled.

FOOD TRUST PROFITS CAUSE HIGH PRICES, FIGURES SHOW

(FTA News for July 15 carried a column by Research Director Joseph Califf analyzing these and other profit figures taken from the companies themselves. The table below gives the picture in detail.)

Every day the newspapers and the radio—and an occasional misguided or misinformed individual—try to tell us that high prices are the result of "high wages."

If wages weren't so "high," the argument runs, prices would go down. (This of course, whether the person making it knows it or not, is an argument for wage cuts.)

But the real truth behind the inflated cost of living is not wages, its profits. Profits of U. S. industry are today at their highest peaks in history. For 1947 it is estimated that they will go as high as $16 billion.

Profits are not spent on consumers goods — food, clothing, shelter, the way wages are. Consequently, the bigger the profits, and the higher the prices, the less consumers goods are bought.

Profits (after taxes) of Leading Companies with which FTA has Contracts

Company	Profits after taxes 1945	1946	Percent Inc. 1946 over 1945	1946 profits as % of net worth
1. GRAIN PROCESSING				
Allied Mills, Inc.	$ 1,453,000	$ 2,708,000	86.3%	10.4% [1]
Archer Daniels Midland Co.	3,924,000	10,207,000	160.1	23.9 [1]
Central Soya, Inc.	1,037,000	2,731,000	163.3	31.8
Penick & Ford	1,355,000	2,299,000	69.6	18.6
Ralston Purina Co.	2,665,000	4,053,000	52.0	9.7
2. CANNING				
Calif. Packing Corp.	2,635,000	9,279,000	252.2	15.5
Hunt Foods, Inc.[2]	530,000	5,089,000	860.2	43.0
Kuner-Empson Co.	71,000	240,000	238.0	47.7
Libby McNeill & Libby	3,882,000	4,935.000	27.1	10.7
Pacific American Fisheries, Inc.	414,000	759,000	83.3	9.2
Sardick Food Prod. Corp.	81,000	96,000	18.5	5.3 [1]
3. DAIRY PRODUCTS				
Beatrice Foods Co.	2,955,000	5,865,000	98.4	20.4
Carnation Co.	2,447,000	3,635,000	48.5	11.5
National Dairy Products Co., Inc.	14,114,000	30,444,000	115.7	22.8
United Milk Products Co.	320,000	1,046,000	226.9	42.5
4. COTTONSEED OIL, etc.				
Armour & Co.	9,173,000	30,291,000	230.2	15.6
Cudahy Packing Co.	2,505,000	6,721,000	168.3	15.5
Proctor & Gamble Co. (owner of Buckeye Cotton Oil Co.)	19,111,000	28,108,000	47.0	17.2 [1]
Swift & Co.	12,304,000	16,395,000	33.2	5.6
5. MISCELLANEOUS FOODS				
Consolidated Grocers[4] (owns Marshall Canning Co. & Reid, Murdoch & Co.)	1,032,000	5,721,000	454.3	48.6
General Foods Corp.	13,144,000	21,148,000	60.8	19.3
Standard Brands, Inc.	9,576,000	13,948,000	45.6	14.2
George Weston, Ltd. (owns Southern Biscuit Co.)	1,020,000	1,496,000	46.7	14.1
TOTAL (23 companies)	$105,748,000	$207,214,000	95.9	—

[1] Return on net worth as of June 30, 1946.
[2] Figures for 1946 cover 9 months only because of change in company's fiscal year. In other words, in 9 months of fiscal 1946 they earned 860% more than in 12 months of the previous pear. Net worth used was average for February 28, 1946 and November 30, 1946.
[3] Net worth used was average for June 30, 1945 and December 31, 1946.
[4] Figures for 48 weeks only.

Quote Of The Week

Many of the nation's farmers stand shoulder to shoulder with organized labor in condemning the Taft-Hartley law, as shown in the following quite taken from the "Review", Minnesota farm paper:

"This measure is only a warning of things to come, if the power of concentrated wealth is not curbed. It is the first step toward fascism. It is the same kind of beginning Hitler made.

"The farmers are commencing to understand that corporation profits do not buy their products, but wages do.

"The Taft-Hartley anti-labor bill will not produce industrial good will and national prosperity. It will produce the opposite.

"We predict that no one could have done the Republican party a greater harm than their own Senators and Representatives in Congress, assisted by the reactionary Democrats."

Tobacco—The Almost 'Perfect' Monopoly

The tobacco industry is one of the largest, most profitable and most highly trustified in the United States. Long notorious for paying substandard wages to the workers who create its profits, the tobacco trust also cheats and steals from the farmers who grow the tobacco and the consumers who smoke it.

This article, first of two, will show how the tobacco trust keeps prices of leaf tobacco low for the farmers and prices of tobacco products high to the consumer. The article will not deal specifically with wages or working conditions in the industry. It will show how labor's allies, the farmers and consumers, are robbed by the trust just as workers are exploited in the trust's factories.

Material in the article is based on U. S. Department of Justice indictments and U. S. Supreme Court convictions of the "Big Three" of the Tobacco trust.

SECOND TO NONE

The tobacco trust of the United States — headed by the "Big Three" — has worked out a system of cheating the farmers and gouging the consumers second to none in the history of American monopoly.

(Every tobacco worker knows how the trust pays among the lowest wages in industry, how it gets long exemptions from paying overtime during the season, how the trust fights unions to protect its super-profits. Our purpose here is to show how the trust applies the same squeeze to the farmer and the smoker.)

Under this system, the tobacco grower gets less for his crop in proportion to the trust's take than any other American farmer, while the consumer pays uniformly high prices for all "competing" brands of tobacco products and is not allowed a chance to buy a lower priced product.

THE CONSPIRATORS

These facts, with a wealth of supporting evidence, came out in a U.S. Government trial of the Big Three—American Tobacco Co., (Lucky Strike) Liggett and Myers Tobacco Co. (Chesterfield) and R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. (Camel) that began in 1940 and ended in 1946 with a conviction and fine under the Sherman anti-Trust Act.

The sentence was a fine of $255,000 against the Big Three (in 1946 Big Three profits were $129,000,000) and an order from the U.S. Supreme Court to go and sin no more.

What had the tobacco trust done to deserve this sentence? In the words of the U.S. Department of Justice in presenting its argument to the Supreme Court:

"The evidence upon which the jury found the petitioners guilty, when viewed as a whole, shows a single panorama of monopoly secured and maintained through conspiracy.

"It is their purpose and practice to purchase leaf tobacco at low, uniform and equalized prices, and it is their purpose and practice to sell tobacco products at high, uniform and identical prices and to force their distributors to maintain this same price equalization as among their brands both at wholesale and retail.

". . . so closely have petitioners worked together that their activities and practices could scarcely be more effectively pursued, or be more effectively coordinated to produce a designed end, if they were in fact initiated and operated under a single organization and management."

How does this conspiracy—which the Government brief said was "against the peace and dignity of the United States"—operate against farmers and consumers? How does it work to cheat and gouge the 3,500,000 farm people dependent on tobacco growing, the 750,000 retail outlets for tobacco, and the 77,000,000 Americans who use tobacco?

SQUEEZE ON THE FARMER

There are four steps in the process of squeezing the tobacco grower:

1) The trust, with all companies working together and through their trade associations, sets the dates of marketing openings and the length of the marketing season.

2) The trust limits the number of tobacco markets which are allowed to operate.

3) The trust agrees in advance of the marketing season on the prices it will pay.

4) The trust agrees on and uses methods of grading and bidding which are not revealed to the farmer, and which place him at a disadvantage at the time of sale.

The principal agent of the trusts is the Tobacco Association of the U.S., which is made up of buyers, warehousemen and others, but which excludes farmers. (This year, for the first time, some farmers were let in on this deal.)

The Association fixes the date of market openings and determines how long the market shall operate. Opening dates are set for a time when the bulk of the crop is ready. Thus the farmers are stuck with the earlier portion of a highly perishable crop until the bulk of the crop in the region is ripe.

When the markets are opened, this backlog of earlier leaf makes it difficult for the farmers to get their crop into a warehouse. Harvested tobacco deteriorates rapidly. Often the growers are forced to drive from market to market, looking for space, while their leaf rots in the wagons.

The grower whose leaf is late is equally out of luck. He must sell before the big company buyers leave or else take a very much lower price.

This adds up to great pressure on the grower to rush his leaf to market without the careful and accurate grading which would help bring a fair price.

"RUSHED TO DEATH"

As one farmer testified at the first trial in 1940: "We need a longer market so the farmer can have ample time to sell his tobacco and not be rushed to death."

In addition to rushing the farmer to death, the trust limits the number of markets and prevents the opening of new ones, by the simple device of refusing to buy in a market unless all companies buy there. Foreign buyers (mainly Imperial Tobacco Co. and British-American Tobacco through its subsidiary, Export Leaf, go along with the Big Three. Obviously no market can operate without them. The few buyers who work outside the trust are speculators who offer even lower prices to the grower.

Thus the farmer has no out. He has to sell his leaf where, when and how the trust says.

Once inside the market with his crop, the grower finds no competition on the prices offered. The trust has taken care of that, by telling its buyers in advance not only the price they shall pay for each grade, but also the exact amount they shall buy.

To clinch this, each of the big companies sends the same number of buyers to the market. There they also have the job of watching each other, to see that no buyer pays a price lower than the one agreed upon. Its not that they don't trust each other, but business is business . . .

As the U.S. Supreme Court said in its decision fining the Big Three:

"(The companies) were not so much concerned with the prices they paid for the leaf tobacco as that each should pay the same price for the same grade and that none would secure any advantage in purchasing tobacco . . .

"The prices which were set as top prices by the petitioners (the Big Three) or by the first of them to purchase on the market, became, with few exceptions, the top prices prevailing on those markets."

(to be continued)

From FTA pamphlet